



March 7, 2022

Chairman Merrin  
Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

Chairman Merrin:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Massillon to voice my opposition to the current language in HB 519 that would significantly weaken municipalities ability to enforce compliance with community's tax regulations which in turn jeopardizes our largest revenue source.

As currently written, the bill eliminates the ability of municipalities to apply a late penalty and fees on municipal taxpayers for not filing a required tax return if the taxpayer does not have a tax balance. Municipalities must be able to have an enforcement mechanism associated with all aspects of compliance and it must be adequate enough to ensure accurate and fair administration of the municipal income tax, thus protecting all of our taxpayers.

Without some sort of monetary penalty, municipalities will not be able to adequately enforce our communities' filing requirements so that they are equally applied to all taxpayers.

In most instances where a taxpayer is alerted of a non-filing situation, the taxpayer contacts our tax department to explain the situation and if requested, we will will waive the penalties and late fee, especially if the taxpayer has not had issues before with their filings. Our community values the services we provide our residents and our tax office works with them daily on a wide range of issues to resolve questions or challenges such as these.

Another issue of concern with the current version of HB 519 is that it would prohibit us from sending notices to a resident if a filing has not been received prior to the October extension due date. Please note that our community does not receive communication from the IRS that one of our taxpayers has received a federal extension. This extension automatically extends the filing date for their municipal tax filing, so we are unaware of any federal extension. Because of that, we send reminders and notices to alert our resident that there is an outstanding obligation to make the filing or to follow up with their preparer if they believe a filing has already been made so that penalties and fees can be avoided and the compliance issue resolved. We believe stripping our cities and villages of this basic communication tool is detrimental to effective customer service. We are here to serve the taxpayers and this important communication between a taxing entity and the taxpayer should be preserved.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee, we thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter and look forward to working with you to improve HB 519 for not only municipalities but all Ohioans.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Kotagides-Boron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lori Kotagides-Boron  
Budget Director/Tax Administrator  
City of Massillon